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SOME INDICATIONS THAT *THE TEMPEST* WAS
REVISED *

By HENRY DAVID GRAY

The Tempest is always grouped with *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* as one of the "dramatic romances" of Shakespeare's final period, but it is essentially different in tone from its companion pieces. The happy outcome of the story is never in doubt; the power of the wise Prospero is never questioned; the happiness and love which are Miranda's due are as assured as her innocence and beauty. Though there is storm and shipwreck, it is only that good may come of it; if conspirators draw their swords their arms are stayed by invisible powers; the labors of Ferdinand are but a two-hours' task, cheered by the presence of Miranda. There is no tyranny of jealous love, as in *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*; the triumph of injustice was of long ago, and is now ready for adjustment and forgiveness. Indeed, the play is as full of music as of magic, of tenderness and charm as of strange and gorgeous devices; it is above all things appropriate for the celebration of some brilliant and festive occasion.

These obvious characteristics led certain commentators,¹ par-

* After this paper was presented at the Modern Language Association meeting in Columbus, Ohio, on March 31, 1920, there appeared an article by Mr. W. J. Lawrence (*Fortnightly Review*, June, 1920), which supports some of my conclusions. Mr. Lawrence regards the masque as written for the betrothal rather than the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth. I have no objection to this substitution. But whether for the betrothal or the marriage itself, the masque must, I believe, have been no part of the original play; and how far this may lead us (together with other considerations) to determine the nature of the drama as it existed in 1611 is the chief concern of my paper.

¹ See Chalmers, Tieck, Garnett, as cited by Furness (*New Variorum* edition of *The Tempest*, pp. 281, 302 f.). Chalmers and Tieck regard the play as inspired by the occasion though not written directly for it. Garnett's statement of the case is contained in full in his *Essays of an Ex-Librarian*, pp. 29-54. Later upholders of the same view are Brandes (*William Shakespeare*, chap. xx), Henry James (Caxton Shakespeare), and Liddell (*The Elizabethan Shakespeare, The Tempest*, Introduction).

ticularly Richard Garnett, to contend that *The Tempest* was composed not as a regular stage play, but as a court entertainment, to celebrate the marriage of King James's daughter, the Lady Elizabeth, to Frederick, the Elector Palatine. This marriage took place in 1613, and that year was consequently assigned by these critics as the date of the first production of the drama. The specific reasons offered for their belief were mainly these: (1) that *The Tempest* is only about two-thirds of the length of the average Shakespearean drama, and hence is suited to such an occasion; (2) that it contains a formal wedding masque which is in itself wholly undramatic, which sadly impedes the action of the drama, and which therefore must be regarded as existing for its own sake—that is, for the sake of celebrating a marriage which that of Miranda and Ferdinand is meant to symbolize; (3) that in its abundance of spectacle, its many songs, and in its economy of scene-shifting, it also partakes very largely of the nature of a court entertainment; (4) that the Lady Elizabeth—the sheltered Island Princess brought up in strict seclusion and now about to marry her princely lover from over seas—is closely paralleled by Miranda in the play, as Frederick is by Ferdinand, while King James would be delicately flattered by the inference that he is shadowed forth as Prospero; and (5) that we have record of a performance of *The Tempest* as part of the celebration of the prince's visit, when he came to England for his official courtship and marriage.²

Though other plays were also given in honor of the prince and the Lady Elizabeth, by other companies as well as by the King's men,³ these would be received simply as dramatic entertainments; but it is inconceivable that the striking analogy presented by *The Tempest*, with its formal wedding masque invoking a heavenly

² The Count Palatine arrived in England on October 16, 1612. The betrothal ceremony took place on December 27. The wedding was on Shrove-Sunday, February 14, 1613. The prince and his bride left London on April 10. Lord Harrington, Treasurer of the Chamber to King James I, "paid to John Heminges upon the counsell's warrant, dated at Whitehall xx⁶ die Mai, 1613, for presentinge before the Princes Hignes, the La. Elizabeth, and the Prince Pallatyne Elector, fowerteene severall playes," of which *The Tempest* was one. Vertue's ms., cited by Furness, p. 275. As *Philaster* and *Love Lies A-Bleeding* are given as separate items, it is assumed that thirteen is the correct number.

³ Fleay: *A Chronicle History of the London Stage*, p. 175.

blessing upon the bridal pair, could be witnessed with unconscious unconcern by those in whose honor it was definitely presented. If it is inconceivable that they could have taken it as anything else than a personal tribute, is it conceivable that it could have been prepared in this way without an equally conscious intention on the part of the author?

In spite of all this, a majority of the critics held to 1611 as the probable date of composition of *The Tempest*; and when a reference in the Accounts of the Revels at Court⁴ to a performance on November 1 of that year, long supposed to be a forgery, was proved by Mr. Ernest Law to be genuine,⁵ it was no longer possible to believe that Shakespeare wrote his comedy for the Lady Elizabeth's wedding. And yet, the points just mentioned seem to some of us difficult to account for on any other basis. It is the purpose of this paper to consider what arguments there are for believing that *The Tempest* of 1611 was closer, both in length and character, to *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, and that it was cut down and revised, with the masque features added, to suit it for this special occasion. This has been offered as an unconfirmed suggestion by two or three commentators, because it would so obviously reconcile the fact of the 1611 date with the characteristics of the play as we have it. My paper, therefore, is an attempt to substantiate what has already been felt to be a reasonable conjecture.⁶

⁴ Edited by Peter Cunningham for the Shakespeare Society, 1842.

⁵ *Some Supposed Shakespeare Forgeries*, 1911.

⁶ Verplanck suggested that advantage was taken of the occasion "to improve and give novelty to the piece by revisal and enlargement" (Furness, p. 297). Morton Luce, while vigorously opposing Garnett's theory, remarks, "The play, written earlier, might have been shortened and otherwise modified to suit the royal occasion; and it is also possible that this shortened form is *The Tempest* as we now have it" (Arden edition, p. xxii). Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch believes that this was the case (*Shakespeare's Workmanship*, 1917, p. 282). Some have held merely that the masque was inserted later. Fleay attributes the masque to Beaumont (*Life and Work of Shakespeare*, p. 249), an opinion which Robertson thinks "fairly well grounded" (*Shakespeare and Chapman*, 1917, p. 210). But it is quite impossible that the play could have stood at all as it is before the masque was added, as the mere removal of the masque would leave almost nothing to the fourth act. As the play stands, it occupies, says Herford, "the place of a strict dramatic crisis" (Eversley edition, p. 400). Whether or not Shakespeare called in the services of a practiced masque maker is another question, since he could have done so either in writing or revising.

The arguments which were brought against the Garnett theory before Mr. Law made it untenable by proving the 1611 date to be beyond peradventure⁷ must be briefly examined lest some of them should apply as well against so thorough-going a revision as I am now about to propose. Sir Sidney Lee comments that "the plot of *The Tempest*, which revolves about the forcible expulsion of a ruler from his dominions, and his daughter's wooing by the son of the usurper's chief ally, was hardly one that a shrewd playwright would deliberately choose as the setting of an official epithalamium in honour of the daughter of a monarch so sensitive about his title to the crown as James I."⁸ The main plot would, of course, according to our theory, belong with the original writing, so Shakespeare did not "deliberately choose," but the play itself was, we know, deliberately chosen as a part of the royal celebration. It could not, therefore, have seemed offensive. The same thing may be said as to any comparison between James I and Prospero. A second objection is that there is nothing to distinguish *The Tempest* from the twelve other plays in Harrington's list; that all of these were old plays,⁹ while some, such as *Othello*, were long. But the nature of the play itself is what differentiates it from the other dramas in the group. A third objection is given by Borton Luce.¹⁰ Granting the special fitness of *The Tempest* to commemorate some marriage at court, Mr. Luce says, "There was a marriage between the Earl of Essex and Lady Frances Howard in 1611." This, besides overlooking the peculiar appropriateness of the drama to the case of the Lady Elizabeth, has the disadvantage of not being true. Essex married Frances Howard in 1606. By 1611, the earliest possible date for *The Tempest*, the disgraceful proceedings which two years later led to their divorce and the shameful remarriage of

⁷ "Audi alteram partem" did indeed offer objections in a series of communications to the *Athenaeum*, 1911, 1912 (see Index). Mr. Law's answers, with some supplementary matter, were published in his volume *More About Shakespeare Forgeries*, 1913. But what settled the matter was expert testimony based on chemical and microscopic examination of ink and paper; and this matter was not questioned in the later dispute.

⁸ *A Life of William Shakespeare*, New Edition, p. 432 n.

⁹ So it is frequently stated. Of one of them, however, we have no other record, so it may have been new. But this play, judging by the title, which is all we know of it, could scarcely have been intended as an epithalamium. It is "the Knott of Fooles"!

¹⁰ Arden Edition, p. xxii, n.

Lady Essex to Rochester, had already become a public scandal. Moreover, there seems to have been no other marriage at Court, celebrated with masque and pageantry, for which *The Tempest* could possibly have been written.¹¹ Its marriage features, therefore, must have been introduced in the revision, or we must be content not to explain them.¹²

It is fair to say, therefore, that the arguments brought against the theory that Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest* in celebration of the Lady Elizabeth's marriage do not count against the suggestion that he carefully revised it for that occasion. On the other hand, the arguments in favor of the original theory do not lose their cogency when reapplied on the present basis, except in one instance. The sheltered Island Princess who married a King's son from far away belonged of course to the drama of 1611, and could only be significant as suggesting a correspondence which was already there. It would be because of this fundamental similarity that *The Tempest* could be made over into a veritable epithalamium.

That *The Tempest* is a thousand lines shorter than the average Shakespearean drama, and that the wedding masque is only to be adequately explained by its appropriateness to the Lady Elizabeth's marriage, are arguments equally applicable to the theory of an original writing or to that of a revision of the drama in honor of the occasion; but I have one further consideration to offer regarding these outstanding features of the play which seems to me significant. The device of the magic banquet,¹³ the formal wedding

¹¹ Nichols, in his *Progresses of James I*, records no marriage celebrated in this way after that of Viscount Hadington to Lady Elizabeth Ratcliffe, February 11, 1608, until we come to that of the Princess in 1613; nor can I find any in the various records of the period.

¹² That *The Tempest* was acted at Court on Hallowmas Night, 1611, does not in the least indicate that it was written as a court entertainment. "As it was the custom of the age," says Cunningham, "not to produce a play at court, 'for his Matys Regal disport and recreation,' before it had been stamped with public approbation on a public stage, *The Tempest* was in all likelihood first produced at the Globe, in the summer of 1611" (*Accounts of the Revels at Court*, p. 225). Not, however, at the Globe. As Professor Cunliffe says, it "was probably first produced on the stage of the company's theatre at Blackfriars a few months before, and it seems to have become immediately popular" (*Shakespeare's Principal Plays*, p. 920).

¹³ "The pantomime and ballet," as Brandes well notes, "are much more

masque, and the humorous antimasque in which the Caliban conspiracy is resolved,¹⁴ that is, all the matters which make the play peculiarly appropriate to the special occasion, come packed together within a space of 350 lines. And it is precisely where these special features come into the drama that it turns aside from being the full-length play that one might well have expected up to that point. The first two acts of *The Tempest* are not unduly short. Indeed, they are a hundred lines longer than the first two acts of *The Winter's Tale*. Moreover, there is a notable abruptness in Prospero's suddenly announcing that his trials of Ferdinand's love are over, that he has already bestowed Miranda upon the Prince, and then proceeding at once to present the marriage masque. The main plot of the drama is practically abandoned and the celebration of the nuptials stands in its stead. As Professor Baker says: "Early we start, with Ferdinand and Miranda, a love story that might easily lead to many complications, but it drops into the background. The plan of Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo to kill Prospero and Miranda might easily result in a number of scenes; it produces one in which they are nearly routed by the fairies. The group of shipwrecked royalty might easily provide much more story and incident than it does."¹⁵ Is it not likely that the original drama worked out these various stories in Shakespeare's usual way? If so, *The Tempest* of 1611 was probably a much more sombre play,—perhaps as nearly tragic in tones as *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*.

It is in connection with the Caliban conspiracy that I first found any indication as to the character of a possible revision. At the close of the wedding masque, when he suddenly recalls this affair, Prospero exhibits a degree of excitement and concern which the occasion does not seem to warrant. He interrupts the dance of the Nymphs and Reapers (which must therefore have belonged with the original writing of the drama, the formal wedding masque being afterwards joined to it), saying in an aside,

elaborate than would have been necessary if the scene were only there for its own sake. . . . King James had, as we know, a fancy for all manner of stage machinery, and Inigo Jones contrived quantities of it for use at court festivals." (*William Shakespeare: A Critical Study*, vol. II, p. 366.)

¹⁴The similarity to the antimasques has been noted by Professor Thorndike (*Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare*, pp. 146, 7).

¹⁵*The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist*, p. 298.

I had forgot that foul conspiracy
Of the beast Caliban and his confederates
Against my life.

Ferdinand says to Miranda,

This is strange; your father's in some passion
That works him strongly;

and she answers,

Never till this day
Saw I him touch'd with anger so distemper'd.

Sending the lovers away with,

A turn or two I'll take
To still my beating mind,

Prospero calls Ariel, saying,

Spirit,
We must prepare to meet with Caliban;

and then what happens? Ariel merely hangs some gay clothing on the lime tree, which the foolish confederates start to steal; and then there enter "divers Spirits, in shape of dogs and hounds, hunting them about, Prospero and Ariel setting them on." There is after all no danger or difficulty to be overcome. Indeed, throughout the whole drama there is, as everyone will admit, no fair encounter between Prospero and Caliban; the dice are too heavily loaded on the side of virtue. Prospero has all the power. With his books he can compel the spirits to obey him; with his magic staff he can prevent the Prince from drawing his sword; he can charm the King and his followers in a magic circle; he can raise and quiet tempests; indeed, what is there that he cannot do? Against him is pitted the poor drudge Caliban, rebellious, but living in mortal dread of the cramps and pinchings, the "urchin-shows" and ape-bitings which Prospero at will can send upon him. To Caliban he has such power,

It would control my dam's god, Setebos,
And make a vassel of him.

And when he does conspire against the mighty magician, who are his associates? The drunken butler Stephano and the simple-minded jester Trinculo. Why, then, does Prospero so gird himself for a mighty encounter which turns out to be only a chasing about

the stage of drunk and helpless clowns? Instinctively we feel that he must have had in mind the danger to Miranda; but unless the threat against his life had in it more actual menace than proves to be the case there was no more need of concern for her than for himself. And it is distinctly the conspiracy "against my life" which moves him to such passion.

But if *The Tempest* was made over into a more suitable piece to celebrate the marriage of the Lady Elizabeth, the features of a court entertainment must have been supplied in place of other matter less appropriate to the brilliant occasion. It is surely possible that the drama as first written showed the cause of Prospero's fear; and it is equally possible that the source of the Caliban plot might reveal the motive of his conduct.

I have endeavored to show elsewhere¹⁶ what the source of the Caliban-Stephano-Trinculo story must have been. For my purposes here it is sufficient to say that in the original story (if I am right about it) the conspirators actually steal the magician's book. The attendant spirits at once appear, ready to obey them. The conspirators plot the destruction of the magician, and are only prevented by the latter's finally getting all the other characters into a magic circle, as Prospero now does with Alonso and his followers. If some such genuine menace formed a part of the plot of *The Tempest* as first written, it is easy to see the reason for Prospero's behavior.

Such an abridgement of *The Tempest* as I have suggested, with the masque features substituted for the later development of the plot, would involve little alteration of the text, and the indications that we find of readjustment are few and negligible. For the sake of completeness I may set down the following.

(1) In III, iii, 11-17, Antonio and Sebastian plan a renewal of their plot to kill Alonso and Gonzalo, and of this we hear no more. As the play stands, it is clearly a "mislead." It may well be that in revising his play for the royal occasion Shakespeare would delete any more serious attempt at regicide.

(2) In V, i, 75-78, Prospero tells of the plot to kill Alonso and fifty lines later says that he *could* reveal this treason but

At this time

I will tell no tales.

¹⁶ *Modern Language Notes*, June, 1920.

As the play is given we are to suppose that in the first instance Alonso has not sufficiently recovered from the magic spell to understand the words; but in this case there is no apparent reason for the words being spoken at all. The speech reads as though it had been written as a direct address.

To these I may add the following which have been suggested by others:

(3) Mention is made of the Duke of Milan's "brave son" as being in the shipwreck, whereas no such character appears. Staunton comments that unless this was Francisco we are "driven to suppose that, to shorten the representation, the character as delineated by Shakespeare was altogether struck out by the actors, while the allusion to it was inadvertently retained."¹⁷

(4) The passage immediately following this reference has been challenged by Mr. E. H. C. Oliphant:¹⁸ "Prospero's 'Soft, sir! One word more,' when the previous words are not given, is a token of curtailment." I can find no comfort in this "token."¹⁹

(5) The humorous interruption in II, i, 10-106, was regarded by Pope as an interpolation, and it is fair to say that it does produce something of that effect.²⁰ Its presence, if added later, would be accounted for by the desire to lighten the play.

¹⁷ Furness, p. 87.

¹⁸ *Modern Language Review*, III, 346.

¹⁹ Prospero says that "At first sight they have chang'd eyes. Delicate Ariel, I'll set thee free for this." Then he addresses Ferdinand: "A word, good sir; I fear you have done yourself some wrong. A word." This does not mean, as it is usually interpreted, in calling himself king of Naples, but, I take it, in looking with too eager eyes upon Miranda. During Miranda's speech which follows, clearly an aside, he whispers his warning to the young prince. Ferdinand answers Prospero by addressing Miranda herself: "O, if a virgin, And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you The Queen of Naples." To this Prospero answers, "Soft, sir; one word more." In an aside he then informs the audience that

They are both in either's powers; but this swift business
I must uneasy make, lest too light winning
Make the prize light.

Acting upon his plan to test Ferdinand, he then assumes his rôle of harshness. The "one word more" is in addition to his whispered warning, and is not an indication that anything is omitted. This would be clear in the acting.

²⁰ I cannot feel that Alonso's apparent reference to a passage in the

(6) Attention has been directed by Nicholson to some smothered rimes in *The Tempest*, from which he concludes that the play "was, at least, so far as the versification is concerned, wholly recast."²¹ His argument is not (to me) in the least convincing.

Except that the antimasque feature of the "strange shapes" which carry in the banquet, dance about it, and finally "with mocks and mows" carry out the table may have been thus elaborated in the revision, I see nothing outside of the fourth act of *The Tempest* which could not with entire consistency with our theory have been in the original version of the play. The fifth act as it stands could have been the final scene of a drama in which the three sets of characters,—the royal group, the lovers, and the clowns,—had all received further treatment. There are some few hints in the play as to what might have been the development between Act III, scene iii, and the final scene of the drama:

(1) At the end of III, iii, Alonso and his followers leave the stage without any apparent restriction upon their power to act of their own free will. The king's last words before leaving the stage are,

Therefore my son i' the ooze is bedded, and
I'll seek him deeper than e'er the plummet sounded
And with him there lie mudded.

In v, i, when we next hear of them, Ariel says they are

confined together
In the same fashion as you gave in charge,
Just as you left them; all prisoners, sir,
In the line-grove which weather-fends your cell;
They cannot budge till your release.

The frustrating of Antonio and Sebastian's second attempt to kill Alonso and Gonzalo, ending by making the whole group close prisoners, may have been the business of one scene.

(2) As already indicated, Prospero's behavior in iv, i, 139-166, the insistence upon securing the books in Caliban's speech, III, ii, 95-106, and the actual stealing of the books in the source suggest the possibility of this as perhaps the climax of the drama. As the

omitted portion is a convincing answer; for such an interruption is more likely to be a substitution than a mere insertion.

²¹ Furness, p. 302.

play stands it is without a correct structural climax. There is no limit to the possibilities which such a situation could involve. The capture of Miranda by the spirits now forced to obey Stephano, which is also hinted in the source, would have supplied the note of tragic seriousness which we find in *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*. It will be recalled that the three things which the conspirators planned are the stealing of the books, the capture of Miranda, and the murder of Prospero, all of which are treated in the source.²² Dramatically considered, *The Tempest* also gives us hints that while Ariel, as the more potent spirit, was able to remain true to Prospero, the "meaner ministers" attended upon "King Stephano" which he opened the magic books:

Remember
First to possess his books; for without them
He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not
One spirit to command. They all do hate him
As rootedly as I. Burn but his books.

What is more to the point is the insistence throughout upon Ariel's obedience and Prospero's constant bargaining with him: a little longer service for his final freedom. The first suggestion of Ariel's reluctant service throws Prospero into an unreasoning fury. We grant something to the petulance of old age, and more to the rage at manifest ingratitude which Shakespeare's sympathetic characters so often exhibit; but there remains still a discrepancy between Ariel's gentle "reminder" and Prospero's sudden excitement. So far as the King and his associates were concerned, there was little need for Ariel's assistance once the affair of the shipwreck was arranged. But the first hint of disobedience at once brings out Ariel's former servitude:

Thou liest, malignant thing! Hast thou forgot
The foul witch Sycorax?

It need not have been without dramatic point that Ariel's hint of unwilling service, the reference to his former servitude to another, and Prospero's unreasoning excitement are all associated with the introduction of Caliban.

²² Compare the present writer's "The Sources of *The Tempest*" in *Modern Language Notes*, June, 1920. My argument therein is strongly reinforced by Mr. W. J. Lawrence in the (London) *Times Literary Supplement*, November 11, 1920.

This, then, is the argument in favor of the view that Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest* in 1611 as a full-length play, and that he adapted it, somewhat in the manner indicated, for the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth. If our theory is measurably near the truth, it may contain a drop of comfort for those who have believed—and it has been said by some critics who are not prone to be fanciful or sentimental—that Shakespeare gave through Prospero his final message to the world. We need not be troubled by certain indications that *The Winter's Tale* was composed after *The Tempest*. It would be when he had ceased even from his collaboration with Fletcher, when he knew that his work was finished, that Shakespeare gave his final touches to *The Tempest*, and "bade farewell to his art."

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